Orkney

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Orkney

by Miss_Black_Fox

Summary

Selkies are extinct, or, were extinct until the last one is caught on satellite imagery. Hannibal Lecter, a sport hunter of the supernatural, had planned on killing the selkie to sell its rare skin, and claim its flesh for his own dinner table. However, the best laid plans never go as expected.

Notes

“I will drag you into the sea and drown you,” The selkie answered, purposefully extending each word.

“I would like to see you try.”

See the end of the work for more notes

Orkney Island

“I thought selkies were extinct. Hunted to death,” Hannibal Lecter spoke into the microphone that were crudely attached to an old air fighter’s helmet. An ancient thing patched and re-patched over the decades to extend its life far beyond the intended limits. Hannibal refused to shout, even over the roar of the small plane’s engine. With their one and only stop on the Mainland behind them, they continued their journey over a narrow strip of ocean to Orkney Island.

“Yeah, they were,” Frederick Chilton smiled too widely. Hannibal thought the man looked ridiculous, “We caught one on satellite,”

Hannibal raised a brow, but otherwise looked unimpressed. It was an inevitable thing that technology would overtake the supernatural world. Natural forts of safety, once beyond human sight, now laid bare under satellite imagery. Vampires and werewolves easily slain from a distance with rifles and silver bullets. It removed the thrill of the hunt, the primal savagery that came with endless days spent tracking, and the thrill of victory that came with a hard fought battle.

Under normal circumstances, Hannibal prefered to track his supernatural prey the old fashioned way, through his own research and wit. However, not every creature could be tracked through such means. Sometimes technology was needed, “Though modern technology is impressive, it is not infallible. You said you have definite proof, Chilton. I will not be happy to have detoured my original plans, at your bidding, I might add, and come all this way to find we had been seeking the proverbial wild goose.”

“You won’t be disappointed, Doctor Lecter, our selkie is here,” Chilton fished around the inside of his jacket and pulled out a white envelope, which he handed to Hannibal, “Take a look for yourself,”

Hannibal opened the envelope with a skeptical air, already planning on scavenging this trip by hunting another local monster. It had been a pain arranging for his visa this go around, and the woman he had spoken too about the delay had been quite rude.

The pictures were, as he predicted, low quality and pixelated. However, on the sandy white beach he could make out the form of the man that was the selkie, and the shed skin trailed behind him like the train of a gown. Selkie skins were incredibly rare, and sold for millions, if not billions to the right person. As for the selkie itself, Hannibal had yet to decide between Blanquette de Veau or indulge his more primal side with Selkie Tartare.

“Where is this beach?” He asked, and handed the pictures and folder back to Chilton. They were flying over the island now, and Hannibal gave it only one cursory glance. Orkney island was entirely unimpressive, all flat, green land that rose up like a streak of paint across a murky, blue sea.

“On an island off of Orkney. We’ll take a boat there, and camp out till night. Our selkie is male, shy, and likes to take long walks on moonlit beaches,” Chilton smiled at his little joke

before continuing, “So, how are we going to catch him?”

“There is no ‘we’,” Hannibal said and when Chilton looked like he were to object, Hannibal silenced the man with a hard glare, “I will catch this selkie myself, and without an audience.”

“Very well,” Chilton said after a long pause, his words stiff.

It was a short flight to Eday Airport, if it could be called as such. The “airport” was little more than a strip of cement boarded by mowed, green lawn. Chilton began to talk again about selkie legends and folktales. Hannibal was tempted to turn off the microphone, if only to stop the rough crackle that accompanied the rat-faced man.

Once they landed, the two walked several hundred yards to the shore, where a boat waited for their arrival. Chilton spoke to the boat man, a local with a thick accent. Hannibal’s hunts has taken him all across the globe, through forests and jungles, and even the frozen waters of the antarctic. Compared to such exotic locations Orkney island bored him to death. There was nothing to look at, only distant farmhouses and the occasional cloud.

All in all, Hannibal expected a truly unspectacular hunt. Selkies themselves were harmless (except to a young woman’s virginity according to the old tales) and easy pickings for an alpha predator such as himself. The skin, however, will fund his pricey endeavors, and ensure financial stability for the rest of his life and then some.

The trip to the unnamed island lasted all of ten minutes, where they landed on the southern shore to set up camp and wait for nightfall. At which point Hannibal would make his solo trip to the beach where the photos had been taken, and claim his prey. As tents were pitched and a small fire started, Chilton continued to drop hints of possibly joining Hannibal on his next hunt, which was to begin the next day. The red-eyed doctor made a point of ignoring Chilton after so long.

That annoying feeling of ennui creeped into the front of Hannibal’s mind, and the mindless work of setting up their camp did nothing to remove it. He kept his thoughts busy with the griffon hunt he planned for the following weeks.

“Can selkies sing?” Chilton asked as he finished setting up chairs around the fire. The local boatman laughed at Chilton.

“Aye, but not like mermaids or sirens. A mermaid’s song can enchant the mind, but a selkie sings to the heart. They don’t need it, though, it is their beauty that captures the attention,” The old boat driver said. The man was in his twilight years, with a balding head, and a wispy white beard, helpless against the breeze that swept over the flat island. “Some say they can summon storms and over-turn boats,”

“Selkie lore isn’t the most consistent,” Chilton said with a sarcastic smile.

“What supernatural lore is?” Hannibal said. He sat down by their low fire. The heat of the flickering flame drove away the chilled wind that nipped at his exposed skin.

Chilton continued to speak with a tone of superiority, “In general, selkies are gentle creatures, but there are stories of their wrath. Selkie women luring men to their deaths in the sea, or luring heartbroken lovers into the waters on certain festival nights. If you ask me, the selkies are nothing special. They’re but simple shapeshifters given too much credit. Though, they apparently make for great wives. Shame this one is male.” The man laughed in a vulgar way, and the old local joined in. The two shared raunchy jokes, ones that Hannibal did his best to tune out.

From his things he fished out his sketchbook and continued his work on a picture of his boarding school in France. For once, Chilton had the sense to leave Hannibal alone, and continued to talk to the old local about selkie legends and tales. By the time the sun set a few hours later, the two men seemed convinced they knew the most of anyone about the rare, and soon to be extinct creature.

An hour till sunset, Hannibal left the two men, and went on the lonely hike to the secluded beach of the selkie. With the smooth, rich colors of the sunset over the grassy plains, their image reflected in the wind-sept waters of the salty ocean, he could, for a moment, think of the island as beautiful. A fleeting beauty, one that changes and fades as the sun dips into the horizon, and left him in darkness.

Hannibal had no flashlight or any other light source; he did not need such things. The light of the full moon lit his path, and he waited in the rocks at the far end of the beach. The white sand took on a pearly sheen in the moonlight, and appeared as smooth as silk. The hunter could see why the selkie prefered this beach. Perhaps he had been too quick to judge the simple island.

Hunting is a test of patience, and he often waiting in ambush for his prey. Hannibal envisions the hunt in his head, planning the approach and kill vividly. While the selkie walks the beach, he will sneak up on the shifter, and take the skin. From there, the selkie would be at his whims. He will make its death quick and painless. A mercy not often given to the supernatural. The hunter shifted his position amongst the rocks, and found a moderately comfortable spot in which to sit and wait.

When the moon reached its peak in the sky, the selkie came onto the beach.

It came from the water in the form of a sleek seal. Possibly dark brown in color, but inky black in the dark. It pulls itself onto the beach with short flippers and jerking movements. Once clear of the waves, the slim body jerks once, a long back arched off the sand, and below it two legs appeared. The selkie stood, its dark fur shed into a long, wide skin that slid off the slender shoulders of the newly shifted man. Its skin glowed like pearls as it walked the moon-lit beach.

Hannibal slipped out from behind the rocks, and moved fast and low along the shore. The selkie would not hear his approach across the loamy sand, and it takes him seconds to close the distance between them. By the time the selkie is aware that he is not alone, Hannibal’s hands close around the end of the selkie skin, and with a sharp tug yanks it from the shifter’s grasp.

The creature lets out a startled cry of pain, and turns on his heels to glare at Hannibal. Hannibal's eyes flashed. Interesting, did this creature intend to fight back? A spark of excitement flashed inside him, igniting a thrill of anticipation. The lore suggested that selkies became desperate when their skins were taken, and offered anything to the ones who held them. Nothing was said about them fighting to reclaim their skins.

"Give that back," The selkie shouted, his accent thick, and completely foreign to Hannibal. It took the hunter a moment to translate the words into proper english.

"It is a fine skin," Hannibal said straightening, and fingered the fine, sleek fur. It was softer than any silk, or any velvet he's ever experienced. His fingers felt no resistance or friction across its damp surface. The selkie lunged for the skin. The hunter held up his arm, and the selkie collided against it. It reached in vain for the skin held just out of reach. With a grunt Hannibal swung his arm around, throwing the shifter off his arm and back into the sand, "I think I shall keep it for myself."

The selkie gave a frustrated growl, and glared at Hannibal. It nearly blended into the sand, but its pearly skin was brighter than the sand, like it were bioluminescent instead of reflecting the light of the moon. Its body was lithe, shoulders and hips marked with sharp angles. A mop of dark brown hair framed an angelic face. With such a beautiful appearance, comparable to that of renaissance masterpieces, it was easy to see how females would be enchanted by it.

"I am curious, what would you give me to have your skin back?" Hannibal regarded the selkie with open curiosity. It gave a glare in return, its eyes moving from him to the skin held tight in his hands.

It spoke quickly, and in that unusual accent that Hannibal could not decipher.

"Slower," Hannibal prompted.

"I will drag you into the sea and drown you," The selkie answered, purposefully extending each word.

"I would like to see you try."

Like a barracuda that whips through the water with frightening speed, the selkie was on his feet, and tackled Hannibal's legs. Caught unaware, Hannibal was knocked off balance. The selkie's legs searched for purchase on the smooth sand, and kicked off, sand flying to the air as it pushed the two of them into the surf.

Hannibal tried to roll them over and pin the selkie, but underestimated the strength held in that lithe body. The shifter bite his bicep, tearing away skin and flesh. A wash of salt water over the fresh wound, sent a spasm of pain through Hannibal. He released his grip on the selkie and its skin. Hannibal, in a fury reached for the selkie, and gripped it around the shin, but the smooth, wet skin slipped right out of his grip.

And the selkie was gone. For one moment, as Hannibal searched the coming waves for sign of the man or skin, he thought he saw the dark head of a seal bobbing on the surface of the

water.

Obsession

Chapter Summary

> The shifter turned to bat him away, but Hannibal was faster, and slammed the fist-sized rock against the selkie's head.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal returned to the selkie's beach every summer for the next seven years.

The first year he hid himself as he did before, amidst smooth, surf-worn rocks and gritty sand. And waited patiently. When the selkie did not show up on the first day, he waited another five before he was forced to return to the civilized world, and attend to work and social duties. The second year he watched the beach from afar with binoculars. He waited for days, and still no selkie.

The third and fourth year were spent scouring the various beaches of the Orkney islands. Chilton unable to capture another picture of the selkie. Hannibal nearly killed the man for failing him. His trips lasted for weeks. Salt and the smell of damp grass clung to his clothes even after several washings. Hannibal burned his clothes and purchased new ones to remove the taint of Orkney.

On the fifth year Hannibal set up traps along the selkie's beach, and several other close-by locations, then camped out in the long grass, the hollow notes of the crickets his only company. The following morning the traps yield no results aside from the unlucky fish. They would supplement his meals.

Hannibal waited in open sight on the sixth year. He set up camp on the sand, a folding chair set right against the waves. There he sat, feet soaked in the surf, a tempting target for his selkie. Even on the night where he drank until he threw the empty bottles into the ocean and chased them with curses, the selkie refused to show. A bitter taste welled up in his mouth, and it tainted every meal he ate on those damnable islands.

Some nights he would forgo eating all together, and walk the islands, along beach and rocky cliffs. Under the tang of salt in the air he could smell the animals on the farms, and the dry smell of wheat. In the mornings he sketched boats on the ocean, black shadows against the backdrop of the morning sun.

Hannibal Lecter is a dangerous man. On his hunts he had tracked and killed werewolves, griffons, vampires, sirens, and even a dragon. There had been no monster to escape him, until that selkie. Of all the monsters he hunted, the fair-faced selkie haunted him. In his drawings the selkie was captured in the rough texture of charcoal, or in the soft touch of pencil lead.

Drawing upon drawing constructed, composed or violently sketched with savage slashes of his pen. A man obsessed, Hannibal committed every detail of the selkie to paper, and nothing he did ever came close to the beauty that was the selkie. No medium on earth could capture the color of its skin under the moonlight.

Each drawing an empty promise, Hannibal would move as if to toss them into the fire and let the flames destroy what he could not. The drawings would never face such a fate, and instead he placed them within a black portfolio abandoned in his attic.

Outside of his obsessive, torturous hunt, his life continued on as normal, or what passed as normal for Hannibal Lecter. He left the field of surgery to pursue psychiatry, and charmed his way through the social circles of the Baltimore elite. When bored he would taunt the FBI as the Chesapeake Ripper. Nothing he did distracted him from the selkie.

An alpha predator outdone by a seal shapeshifter. Something utterly repulsive, and yet, completely admirable. A timid creature had escaped him with its life, something that earned Hannibal's respect. Greater still, the selkie had injured him. Hannibal was no stranger to injury, his body a showcase of various scars earned on hunts, but no creature went so far as to rip flesh from body and out of no desire to eat, but out of natural brutality.

The hunter wondered if the selkie consumed the flesh it stole. A trophy of victory over the hunter that came for its life.

June seemed to take years to come around. Hannibal purchased his tickets, and arranged for his plane to Orkney and boat to take him to the selkie's beach. However, there was still a week between now and his flight. After the frustration of the previous years, Hannibal returned to selkie lore. Anything to give him an edge over the selkie, or provide a way to capture it.

The only one who enjoyed this game of hide and seek was Chilton, who would call Hannibal now and then with ideas, or send an email of some obscure text or local story. All of it useless and things Hannibal could have researched on his own.

"Just summon him by dropping seven tears into the sea," Chilton said during their last phone conversation before the trip.

"They are shapeshifters, and hold no other powers," Hannibal insisted.

"Or so you think," Came the smug reply. Chilton who, though he did not know the full tale of what had happened that night seven years ago, understood enough of what had happened to be an annoying prick, "Shifters are known to have increased strength or senses. And selkies are often considered more feyfolken than shifters,"

"Do you have any new information, or are you going to regurgitate the same word bile you always spill from your mouth, Chilton?" The threat cut through his words, and across the phoneline to Chilton who made an excuse to end the conversation.

When Hannibal gathered tears from his latest victim as the Ripper, he did not see it as an act of desperation. Rather, it was the act of a man who wished to be thorough, and of someone who is persistent. Later that night Bedelia spoke of his obsession outloud. Her words added salt to the bitterness that writhed within him. He ignored her suggestion to let the selkie go.

On the flight to the Orkney Mainland Hannibal decided not to eat the selkie.

For any other creature he would relish the chance to bring exotic fare to his table. However, after seven years of futile hunts and frustration Hannibal wanted more than to just capture his selkie. A victory this long in the works must be savored, and held onto for years to come.

Rain fell in thick sheets as his flight lands at Kirkwall Airport on the mainland. Moisture smeared across the windows of the plane blocked his view of Kirkwall several miles to the north. The city diminished by fog and rain.

Hannibal stepped off his plane clothed in a plastic poncho that is soaked through when workers ran out onto the runway and herded him into the airport. There is confusion, and even outcry amongst the gathered crowd inside. Bodies brushed past one another in effort to move closer to the televisions propped on the walls. Every flight has been canceled due to the weather, and from the news report that played on television screens, many incoming flights were forced to turn around.

The worst storm of the year formed off the coast and would hit land in a matter of minutes.

Meteorologists and scientists both were baffled by the strange, and violent phenomena. Before Hannibal were pushed back by encroaching elbows and nagging hands, he saw the satellite view of the storm, an angry black eye that threatened to swallow the islands whole within its maw.

Chilton and the rest of his team, six strong, were already at the airport. By luck they had been bumped to an earlier flight and waited for him at an empty end of the terminal.

Hannibal approached their boat man, “When can we leave?”

“Leave?” The man said, “We aren’t going anywhere. Not in this storm. Roads are too dangerous to drive on.”

Chilton butted his way into the conversation like he were apart of it the whole time, “Our boat is in Kirkwall. It’s not going anywhere. It is my suggestion that we wait out the storm.”

Hannibal sneered at Chilton. Of course they will have to wait out the storm, but the rat-faced man had to be the one to point out the obvious, and make himself appear as the reasonable one. The strings of Hannibal’s patience were wound tight, while Chilton struck the keys with a childish ignorance, a haphazard song.

Forced to submit to the weather, Hannibal and his team spent the night at the airport with dozens others. He rested in a back corner that smelled strongly of bleach and other cleaning

chemicals, but it was quiet and the the smooth leather cushion was not too uncomfortable to rest on. As he lay, head propped upon his arm, Hannibal stared out the wide windows that gave an unhindered view of the ocean and the waves that crashed upon the shore. Hannibal accepted the setback for what it was, and settled in to the plastic seat to rest. By tomorrow the storm will have passed and he can head to the beach.

The next day he woke to rain pounding against the window in a series of flat thuds, one after another, relentless in their attack. The storm had not passed. On the television weather reporters remained confused and mystified by the bizarre storm. What appeared to be a normal storm, though unnatural in its formation, refused to move from the islands; as strong now as it were before. Its epicenter: Orkney island.

Only Chilton was pleased by their misfortunate, “Tales of male selkies summoning storms don’t seem so impossible anymore now do they?” The rat-faced man had the gall to look smug over this. Hannibal turned on Chilton, towering over the man who shrunk back in fear.

“I suggest you cease speaking, least I use you as bait for the selkie,” Hannibal warned. He moved away from the crowds and his team to think on his own.

It seemed selkies held more power than he thought. Other selkie mythos clicked into place following this new revelation. It is said that once a selkie came into contact with human, they could not come ashore again for seven years. Had Hannibal put any credibility into that claim, he could have saved himself much frustration. Despite the smear of his own folly against his record, it provided an added challenge. The selkie knew that Hannibal would return, and planned for it. This storm would only be the beginning, and should Hannibal fail this time, it would be another seven years before he could try again.

Another day would pass until the storm died down enough for travel. Hannibal and his team left the airport, going by car to Kirkwall a few miles away. When they arrived in the grey-stone town the rain stopped completely.

“He could be tired,” Chilton said, “Even for a supernatural creature, creating a storm this size and for this long has to be tiring.”

“Then it is a fool to have used up all its strength so quickly,” Hannibal said, but put no feeling or conviction into his words. The selkie was smart. Hannibal did not see it doing something so foolish. The hunter stood on the end of the dock, his gaze focused on the slate grey waters. No seal head bobbled above the surface.

This is a trap. His selkie has played its hand, and now lay in wait for Hannibal’s response. Would the hunter set forth only so the selkie could raise the storm once more and capsize his boat? Or would it be calling the selkie’s bluff?

Opportunity was there, so tantalizing it were almost tangible. Hannibal would not waste this chance. Victory will be his.

Their boat waited at the docks, an iron cage strapped down to the deck. Hannibal jumped aboard and examined the cage and ensure that it was made to specifications. The cage was

large enough for a full-grown man with added room for maneuverability. Should the selkie's powers be fey in nature, the iron would cancel any magical powers of influence.

Satisfied with the cage, Hannibal gave the order to set out. From the mainland to Orkney, the wide-bowed boat cut through the placid waters, the roar of the engine the only sound for miles. Hannibal stood at the bow, and the first to see Orkney on the horizon, a faded-gray smudge of rock and grass. Behind him there was a shout, a desperate call for him to move.

A great wave surged over the boat, nearly capsizing it. Another wave chased the first, matching in fury and power. Overhead grey clouds solidified into a coat of ink black, lit by streaking bolts of lightning. Hannibal seized the the slick rail that ran the perimeter of the deck, and held on as wave after wave crashed over the boat, and tossed it about on the churching waters.

His team shouted orders as they bailed water over the edge, and regain control of the boat. Hannibal shielded his eyes with a hand from the onslaught of wind and water as raging currents tugged the boat threw the water. Wind, wild and screaming blew on the helpless men who clung to rails and crates.

The boat crested a high wave, the bow hung in the air, then swooped down, pointed straight down into the black waters. Hannibal lost his footing, the deck too slick with water to find traction. His fingers slipped from the rail and he plunged into the frigid water. Cold carved itself onto every inch of skin, bone and muscle. A thousand sharp needles that turned him inside out and sucked the air out of his lungs. Hannibal gulped reflexively, saltwater filled the void.

Hannibal kicked his legs, thrashed his arms, anything to keep him moving and slow the numbness that seeped into his extremities. Surface and the depths were indistinguishable from another until, like a child's doll, the current picked him up, his head broke surface long enough to spit out the water and gulp for air.

He was bashed against rocks in the next moment, and pulled back into the water. Pain spasmed across his back and legs, sharpened as salt licked his cuts. Whipped back against the rocks, gouged upon them, Hannibal cried out in pain, his right shoulder blistered and felt as though it were held onto his body by strings. His heart pounded in his ears, each beat another pulse of pain.

Wind whipped against his soaked skin, and he clung to the rocks, strengthened by a burst of adrenaline. Instinct, raw and panicked, took over all thought. Get out of the water. Through the rain and wind he could make out the edge of land above him. Too far. There wasn't enough strength in his limbs to make the climb. Hannibal looked over his shoulder, desperate to see his boat, anything. What he saw, bobbing above the water several feet away, was the head of a seal.

Nothing else mattered in that moment. Rage replaced instinct, and were washed away as a wave plucked him from the rocks, and sucked him down into pitch darkness. Slim hands grabbed his ankle, and jerked him further into the deep. The selkie. Hannibal blindly kicked with his free leg, and felt it connect with something hard.

The hands let go of him, Hannibal, with nothing else to guide him, swam forward. Seconds passed like minutes, his limbs heavy with fatigue and cold. His head broke the surface and the selkie seized him around his waist, pulled him under.

By pure chance or the hand of fate, a strong wave lifted them, and tossed them carelessly onto the shore. Sent twisting and tumbling into the sand, a mass of tangled limbs that frantically kicked and pushed to be free of the other. The selkie pushed him off first, and rolled to the side and towards the water. Hannibal tackled the selkie into the surf. But with ease the selkie threw him off again.

Something hard brushed against his hand, and Hannibal seized the rough object, and made one more lunge for the selkie. The shifter turned to bat him away, but Hannibal was faster, and slammed the fist-sized rock against the selkie's head. In an instant, the shifter fell limp, and Hannibal collapsed beside it on the sand.

Hannibal did not kill the selkie. Something easily confirmed by a hand placed under the selkie's nose, and against its mouth. Warm air brushed against his finger and confirmed that the selkie still breathed.

His breathing heavy, labored with each swell of his chest, Hannibal let himself go limp in the sand.

Color drained from the clouds. From angry black to dull grey, then shimmering white against a blue bruised sky.

He turned his head to look at the unconscious selkie, and smiled.

Chapter End Notes

I can't believe how many hits, kudos and comments this story has gotten already! It has made me incredibly happy and prompted me to get this chapter posted as soon as possible. The thought of making you guys wait was awful. The story was a pain to edit, and I apologize for any errors I've missed.

I hope everyone enjoys the latest chapter! There's more to come soon!

William

Chapter Summary

> “You are taking me away,” It said.
>
> “Yes. I’m taking you to my home,”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

In moonlight, the selkie glowed like luminescent pearls, almost pure white in color, with shades of vibrant blue, pink and teal green. Its skin smooth, and unblemished by hair or scars. Under the light of the evening sun, its skin was gold silk spun and worked until it glowed. Its hair, an intense brown full of luster and golden highlights, curled into tight rings at the ends.

The seal skin, tied firmly around the selkie’s slender waist, was black as a night of a new moon in comparison. Speckled with white and grey spots, like that of a leopard, along the back, and sides that tapered into a shiny, grey belly.

Hannibal secured iron chains around the selkie’s frail-seeming wrists, and wondered what the creature would look like in the morning light, or under the glow of a harvest moon. If in total darkness would its skin still glow, like the creatures who lived in the depths of the oceans, or would it appear as black as its surroundings?

With the selkie before him, each soft feature laid bare, Hannibal knew that his drawings did no justice to the real thing. His sharp sense of memory, something he prided himself upon, paired with one encounter with the selkie, and seven years between then and now, had been faulty. Where he saw only soft features, he neglected the sharper, more masculine angle of the selkie’s jaw, or the clean angles of the hips and waist.

Gasping, and shaking, the selkie woke from unconsciousness, body tightened into a taunt curve as it became aware of the chains that bound it. Hannibal looked into the selkies face and saw vivid grey-blue eyes glared back. Hannibal had not expected the selkie to be awake so soon. A normal human would have been out for much longer.

It jerked its head away and focused upon the chains around its wrists. The selkie twisted and rolled in the sand, the muscles of its arms taunt with effort as it pulled on its bindings. Hannibal watched, a thin smile on his face.

When it could not break free the selkie fell limp in the sand. Giving up so soon? Hannibal thought, and walked closer. Or another ploy? His selkie never ceased to surprise him, and now would be no exception.

The selkie's whole body tensed in the span of a second, then a jerk of its leg and sand flew into Hannibal's face. Fine particles of rock and dust scratched his eyes as dirt and grime wiped across his mouth and tongue.

Even without his sight, Hannibal heard the jangle of the chains and lunged towards the sound, body colliding with the selkie's. He grabbed the selkie around its waist, and pinned its legs with his knees. Hannibal wiped the sand from his eyes as the selkie trashed. A fine sweat coated the selkie's body, the scent sharp, and acidic. The smell of fear.

Teeth clenched, Hannibal slid off the selkie, and seized the creature around the ankle. He will teach the selkie proper fear.

Hannibal dragged the selkie up the beach, away from the water. The hunter leaned close and whispered into its ear, "Try to escape again, and I may feel inclined to cut off your legs."

Words in a language Hannibal had never heard, were spat out of the selkie's mouth. The hunter twisted the selkie's leg with quick and heavy force. Results were instantaneous, the selkie twisted away from him, head thrown back as it let out a strangled cry of pain, like the sound of crystal shattering. The sound clawed against Hannibal's ear drums, but he kept the pressure for a moment longer before he let go.

Heaving deep, gaping breathes, the selkie curled into a tight ball, and shivered.

Hannibal watched the rise and fall of its chest as the selkie recovered, and knew that it would not make another move any time soon. The selkie's spirit is not broken, but it was a step forward. In which direction, Hannibal was unsure, and eager to find out. To keep the selkie he needed to tame it, but would he do it with fear, or with a gentle hand? Given the choice, Hannibal prefered the gentle hand, but one that is tempered by fear.

Even the supernatural are ruled by the same basic psychology as humans. The charm that his earned him his place among high society, will placate his wild selkie into something much more manageable and pleasing.

There was something immensely satisfying, like the pleasing taste of a well aged wine paired with the perfect complementary dish, in the thought of taming this wild creature, and to break its spirit to do so. Such things would be an insult to its nature, and the perfect punishment.

The boat, perched on the sand, waited for the crew to finish their repairs. The storm did no damage to the hull, but motor suffered minor damage. Should this have happened decades ago, before the marvels of steel and motor engines, the selkie's storm would have shattered any boat caught within.

"Absolutely exquisite," Chilton cooed from down the beach. Hannibal did not hear Chilton's approach, and the wind blew downwind from them. The rat-faced man picked up the skin that had slipped away from the selkie during its struggles. Wide-eyed he fondled the dark skin. Boney hands traced the faded spots of blue-grey and along thin white hairs. Something eerily similar to rage welled in the pit of Hannibal's stomach. The skin was too fine for Chilton to befoul with his greedy hands.

Chilton, held the skin close to his face, like he wanted to rub it against his cheeks. “It’s like holding water,”

“That is a poor metaphor,” Hannibal snapped, and tugged the skin out of Chilton’s hands. Chilton opened his mouth, the first sounds of protest already out, but stopped. It would have been unwise to argue with Hannibal, and Chilton knew it. Still, he stared at the skin with lustful eyes, fingers curled into his palm.

The skin was cool, and impossibly smooth. It was cruel to ever let go of it.

Chilton turned his attention to the selkie, but kept glancing at the skin whenever he could, “He must be the last of his kind. Selkies only lived in the waters around Orkney, Scotland and Ireland.” Chilton walked around the selkie, head bobbing as he sought a look at the creature’s face.

“It makes it all the more valuable,” Hannibal answered. He held up the skin. It was as tall as him, and vaguely resembled the shape of a seal. When rolled it up, he found that that skin seemed to shrink to half its size, easily rolled into a thin bundle, light-weight and near weightless despite being thoroughly soaked.

“What are we going to do with him,” Chilton said, and stepped closer to the selkie, bent over for closer observation.

“I, not we,” Hannibal began, clearly stressing the pronouns, “Shall keep my catch,”

Chilton raised his brows, mouth gaping, “Keep it? But Hannibal, you know the stories. Every selkie gets its skin and returns to the sea eventually. There is no story where the selkie doesn’t. I’d say it’s a curse.”

“Then consider me the first to be successful,” Hannibal nodded towards the cliffs where the team finished up their last repairs.

“Don’t count your eggs before they hatch, Hannibal,” Chilton warned. “Everyone thinks they’ll be the first at something before they actually do anything.”

“Go see to it that the cage is ready,” Hannibal said, before he should turn to strike Chilton, “Then call our plane and make sure that they are ready to go as soon as we reach the Mainland,” Chilton nodded, hesitant, before running back to the boat.

Hannibal found the selkie staring up at him with hard, stormy blue eyes. He regarded the creature’s face, admired the perfectly symmetrical structure of it, like it had been painted by a master of the arts. “Can you speak proper English?” He asked.

There was no reply save for the flex of back muscles as the creature curled even tighter into itself.

“It is rude to ignore someone when asked a question. I am not fond of the rude,”

The reply was muffled and still spoken in that thick accent, “Not in the way you speak,”

Hannibal closed his eyes, the selkie's words repeating over and over again in his head. Its accent was unlike anything else he's ever heard, yet familiar. It was similar to the accent spoken on Orkney by the locals, but different, perhaps an older dialect. Though its words sounded crude, like those of a bore, the accent gave a music-like quality to its speech. Something somber, but comfortable, a tone one could listen to for hours and never grow bored listening as it rose and fell in the melodies of speech.

"You are taking me away," It said.

"Yes. I'm taking you to my home,"

The selkie's tight postured changed. Tense muscles relaxed, its belly quivered from one long, exhaled breath. His capture looked defeated. Hannibal could not help but feel the pang of disappointment. Where had the fire he'd seen in the creature gone? The spark that earned it its freedom during their last encounter, andt the drive to bite Hannibal and take a piece of him with it.

Grunts from the men as they pushed the boat off the shore and into the water washed with the perpetual slosh of the waves. The sound fading before the silence was broken by the crack and hum of the motor. Chilton waved from the deck, and motioned towards the open cage.

It was time to leave.

The skin tucked under one arm, Hannibal reached for the chains to yank the selkie to its feet. Teeth, short but sharp, sunk into the skin between his thumb and pointer finger. Hannibal let out one surprised hiss of pain, and glared down at the selkie who openly glared back. In those furious blue eyes Hannibal could see the fire of rebellion and very much enjoyed the challenge it presented him.

"Now, now," Hannibal tutted, "This is no way to act." He flexed his bloody hand, and curled his fingers into the selkie's cheek. Nails bit into soft flesh until the mouth released his hand with that same sharp cry of shattering crystal. Hannibal flexed his grip to grab the selkie just under its jaw, then yanked it up and onto its feet with the painful hold. "Be good, and I will spare you as much misery as I deem fit. Continue to defy me, and you will be punished,"

Under his grip, the selkie was still, but Hannibal could feel a slight tremor under his hands. The quickening of its pulse. Has such a creature ever known fear? It pleased Hannibal to be the first to instruct it on the most primal of all feelings. Fear will keep the creature submissive with time and proper conditioning. For now Hannibal can enjoy swallowing the fire that burned behind those eyes, replacing hot embers with the icey grip of fear.

Pliant under his hold, Hannibal pulled it close and pressed his nose to the selkie's cheek. He could smell the salt of the ocean, and something he couldn't name. Something unknown, unique. Hannibal smelled deeper. This scent gave the feeling of the ocean at its most intimate, deep and fathomless, a smell undefinable but so expressive he could lose himself deep within it as it pulled him under the waves, and willingly into the deep.

"Are you smelling me?" the selkie gasped, and lifted its bound wrists to try and push Hannibal away. The hunter lifted the selkie higher, forcing it to stand on the tip of its toes.

Like a thick perfume, the smell lingered in his mind.

“Remember what I said about being good.” Hannibal said before lowering the shifter, and nodded to the boat. “Walk.”

After one moment of hesitation, its mouth a tight line, it walked towards the boat. Hannibal climbed aboard first, then gripped the selkie around the arm, and helped board. He steadied the selkie as it stepped onto the boat one foot at a time. The selkie stared with open horror at the iron cage that awaited it. Under his hand Hannibal could feel the muscles tense, and saw the slight shift of movement that betrayed the selkie’s urge to run.

Hannibal kept his grip firm, but not tight, “If you go into the cage without complaint, and behave yourself until we reach the airport, then I will let you out of the cage and we can travel the remainder of our trip like civilized people,”

The hunter knew his team would not like this tactic, and gave each a warning look. He would not have their protests ruin the foundations he began to lay. It was a fair offer, and the selkie seemed to consider it, though, continued to eye the cage with understandable worry. As Hannibal began to think it would reject his offer, it nodded its head. Hannibal released his grip on the shifter’s arm, and the shifter walked right into the cage, its gaze turned out to the sea as Chilton closed the door and locked it.

“Forget hunting, Hannibal, you should tame monsters for a living,” Chilton laughed. From inside the cage the selkie trembled with rage, its hard gaze upon Chilton who laughed all the more. Something cold flashed through Hannibal.

Hannibal seized Chilton and threw him over the side of the boat. The man made the most satisfying splash as his body hit the water. If only there were other monsters to live in these waters who would gladly eat him up. Hannibal allowed for this slip of proper manners to deliver one final warning to the rat-faced man in a tone and language Chilton could understand, “Chilton, shut the fuck up,”

Though it was tempting to let Chilton find his own way back to the islands, the man was pulled back aboard the boat and the small team, plus selkie, set out. They would not return to Kirkwall, but further down the shore to where a private plane waited to take them to the UK, and from there they will then take another private flight to the United States. All done under the utmost security and in private locations. Transporting supernatural creatures was hassle, not impossible, but never easy. The more humanoid the creature, the easier, but the cages to hold things such as griffons or trolls always garnered too much attention.

Chilton, had his uses in that area, his largest asset being his skill at by-passing the headache that is airport security and bureaucracy. Along with misdirecting attention from the planes and their cargo.

As their boat cut through the still waves, Hannibal retrieved a simple brown bag from their equipment and set it beside the cage. The selkie eyed the bag warily. Hannibal motioned for the selkie to come to him. It refused, and looked back out at the ocean.

“I will not remind you to be good anymore than I have.” Hannibal said, “But I need to take off your chains.”

This got the selkie’s attention, who turned back to him, and bright blue eyes searched his face. The selkie came closer and held its hands through the bars of the cage. With a soft touch, Hannibal grabbed the selkie’s hands, and undid the iron cuffs, “Do not get too comfortable, this is only temporary,” He said, then picked up the bag and held it through the bars.

“Take it,” Hannibal urged, “It’s clothes for you to wear,”

The selkie immediately shied away from the bag, wariness replaced by rage. A curious reaction, Hannibal continued to the offer the bag, “Is there a problem?” He prompted.

“You give me clothes to wear, to replace my skin,” It said.

So there was something significant about clothes. The selkie’s skin allowed it to take the form of a seal and live in the sea. Following that logic, to wear the clothes of humans would make it feel human. Hannibal placed a tender smile on his face, “You will have to wear clothes if you wish to leave the cage. When we reach our final destination you may take them off again if you wish,”

“Your face holds lies,” the selkie said, it looked at Hannibal, but never made direct eye contact, “You speak truth, but your face is false,”

“How can you tell?” Hannibal said, honestly curious. Very few could see past the human mask he wore.

The selkie was quiet, and took a timid step forward to grab the bag from him and rummage through it. It was avoiding his question, but Hannibal allowed it for now, as the selkie chose to comply with clothes. It can have that small victory.

As expected, the selkie had little experience with human clothing. Hannibal was ready to step in and provide guidance, but the selkie once more out did his expectations, and figured how to put on the loose pants and shirt. It ignored the underwear, which remained in the bag. The selkie fiddled with the fabrics of the cotton clothes, and frowned. When one wore something as extravagant as the seal skin, cotton must feel like sandpaper. Later, once they are back at his home in Baltimore, Hannibal will give the selkie silks and other fine fabrics to wear.

From across the boat, Chilton eyed the selkie with inquisitive hunger. The others on his team seemed curious of the creature as well, and looked like they wished to come closer and have a better look at its golden skin. Hannibal leaned against the cage, a silent but powerful deterrent. He will not have them disrupt his selkie or upset it, not when he managed to convince the shifter to follow his instructions.

“They fear who you are,” The selkie said, its words almost indecipherable.

“Is this a gift of your kind? To read people?” Hannibal said, he turned his head to see the selkie’s body language. The shifter watched the crew, and plucked truth from thin air.

“No, it is not,”

“Then you are truly unique,” The words rolled off his tongue as a compliment, but the selkie merely shook its head, shaking loose a spray of dry curls, “What is your name?”

“Willmeir,”

“An old name,” Hannibal said, thoughtful, “William would be a more modern equivalent. Is this acceptable?”

The answer came out as a cruel laugh, “Take my skin, take my name, what left do I have to give?”

Hannibal gave a content hum, “I can think of a few things. Continue to behave yourself and you will not have to lose them,”

“It is not the beasts who are monsters, but the humans who pretend they are not. Even while blood stains their teeth and runs down their throats.”

Hannibal let a smile slip through his mask. He had not expected to find this selkie so interesting, “That is quiet poetic, I can not wait to hear what else you have.”

Chapter End Notes

Thanks so much for all the comments and kudos! You guys are the best, and I know I say this a lot but it makes me really happy to see so many people enjoy the story!

One of my goals for the story is to improve my writing as I write and edit the chapters. I want to write the best story possible and all the positive energy from you guys help make that possible.

Also, as I feel bad for taking so long to write and edit chapters I will try to post more little excerpts or stories on my writing blog. There's not much there yet (mostly because I've been lazy) but I'll try and get more stories posted there soon.

http://delectablelector.tumblr.com/

Baltimore

Chapter Summary

Will leaned back, and out of reach, “I do not find you interesting.”

“You will,” Hannibal smiled.

Chapter Notes

Finally here! Sorry for the long wait, everyone!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Welcome to my home,”

Hannibal held Will’s elbow as he guided the selkie out of the bentley and onto a cobblestone walkway. Before their drive through Baltimore, Hannibal put his jacket on Will. The long sleeves hid the iron cuffs clenched around Will’s slender wrists. Will attracted enough attention on his own without garnering even more suspicion.

Will’s head bobbled from side to side, eyes drooping from the effect of the sedative put into him. Selkie biology seemed to have a natural resistance to human sedatives, and so Hannibal administered double the standard amount. It was a sad necessity, for Will had reacted negatively to the airplane.

In hindsight, it was obvious that the selkie, so unused to modern technology, would be cautious. As soon as the engines of the plane kicked and sputtered into life, the selkie bit its captors before it dashed for the door.

It took Hannibal and four others to subdue the selkie and chain it to a cargo hook. Even then Will struggled until the iron cut into his wrists. Once skin broke and blood poured out, Hannibal administered the sedative. Will slept for the rest of their flight and Hannibal was able to treat and bandage its bloody wrists. Since then, Hannibal kept Will under a cloud of drugs.

Now, finally outside his home, Hannibal could relax. The worst was over.

Hannibal lead into his home. Behind them he locked the door. The new locks were pristine against the dark wood of the doors. Hannibal had prepared for this moment for years. He

invested in new locks for all the windows and doors to prevent the escape of a curious and determined selkie.

Though it would be a simple matter to keep the selkie locked up, Will should have free run of the house. Though a creature of myth, his selkie is not a wild animal. Even the most proud of lions will lose their spirit behind iron bars. Hannibal wanted Will's spirit tamed, not beaten. To treat Will like an animal would earn himself hatred and stoke the flames rebellion. His house is not a prison, but shall be a home for the selkie.

Hannibal held Will's head up, "The sedative should be wearing off soon. Perhaps I shall make you a meal. You will be hungry after such a long trip."

From the foyer he lead Will deeper into the house, and into the kitchen where he set Will down upon a stool beside the counter. Will experimentally ran his hand over the smooth granite surface, blue eyes focused upon the red and black spatters atop a grey field.

"The salmon is a fascinating fish." Hannibal said, and rolled back his sleeves, "It begins its life in fresh waters, but when it hatches it leaves its birth home for the ocean." Hannibal produced a plate of salmon fillets from the refrigerator, and removed the plastic wrap from the plate. "Once they reach maturity they return to the same river they were born in to lay their eggs for the process to begin again. One life completed, and the beginning of another."

Will attempted to lift his head, and when he could not look at Hannibal he looked at the salmon. Hannibal smiled, taking Will's silence as listening, and continued.

"The ancient Celts considered them the wisest of all animals. They symbolize the struggle of life and new beginnings." Hannibal placed a pan on the stovetop, and covered the bottom with kosher salt. He set the temperature to high. "It is my hope that this will be a new start for the both of us,"

"Do you mean that?" Will's hands were braced on the table. Unable to lift his head all the way. His fingers slid across the counter as if looking for better purchase. "A man does not chase a fish for seven years to admire it."

Hannibal smiled easily, "There is much to admire about you."

"You mean there is much worth in me." Will said. He shifted his grip on the table, and found he had the strength to keep his head up. His gaze met Hannibal's. In Will's blue eyes Hannibal could see hate as clearly as he could see Will.

"You are the last of your kind." Hannibal said. He held a hand over the salt in the pan. Satisfied with the temperature, he placed the salmon fillets ontop the salt. Hannibal covered the pan with a glass lid, and reduced the temperature by half. "And your skin is even more valuable."

"What do you do with the last of a race?" Will did not look at Hannibal, but kept his gaze on the kitchen window. Beyond the glass was his freedom.

Hannibal leaned back against the counter, and regarded the selkie. Under the florescent lights of his kitchen the selkie's skin was pale, the color flat. Completely absent of the rich hues and tones that spread across its skin when in the moon or sun light. Hannibal will have to give Will the east-facing guestroom where the windows let in natural light for most of the day.

But he had left Will waiting for an answer long enough. "You are a special case, William."

Will flinched at the use of his new name, but said nothing. Hannibal continued.

"I am a man who appreciates beauty. It can take on many forms, from culture, art, food," He gestured at the pan that held their cooking meal. "In this case, in the form of the very last selkie."

"There is no beauty in imprisonment." Will spat.

"This house is not your prison, Will. I hope for you to think of it as your home."

Will bristled, "I had a home. You took me from my home."

"I gave you a new home." Hannibal said, and returned Will's glare with his cool gaze. Will had been right. He did not bring the selkie home to only admire it. There were other options, once that can profit him quite nicely and make up for the last seven years and fruitless hunting. "You will have your own room, and free run of the house. But there are rules."

Will made a point of staring at the floor.

"I do not tolerate the rude. My first rule is what any society asks of its memebers. That is to be polite. Show courtesy to me, and I will show the same in return. Answer the questions I ask, and I shall answer yours. Give and take. A simple exchange of courtesy." Hannibal leaned on the counter, and tilted his head to the side. He tried to catch Will's gaze, but the selkie was adamant and refused to look Hannibal's way. "We do not need to be enemies. Not anymore."

Without notice Will's gaze pinned him down with steady eyes, and captured Hannibal's interest.

"You speak only of lies." Will said, his voice low, dangerous. "They sound like the truth, and they may be half true, but lies can not be hidden from me."

Hannibal saw himself walking a thin line, on either side of him lay a field of broken glass, Will's sharp perception. "What do you think is the truth?"

"The truth." Will said in a mocking laugh. "Is that this is not the end for me. I am not this thing you admire. I am a means to an end. You are going to use me. That is the truth." Will did not hide from Hannibal, not now. Once again Will saw past the mask and pleasant words to the reality that stalked underneath. Hannibal was just as threatened as he was intrigued.

A false step, a weakness revealed, and Will would abuse it. It was more important than ever to gain Will's trust. But Will is sharp, and just as clear to Hannibal as Hannibal was to him. Will is stubborn, intelligent, and waiting for his chance to escape. Breaking his spirit would

be as easy as snapping a twig, all he'd need to do is to push in the right direction. But that's not what Hannibal wanted.

"The truth," Hannibal began, "Is that I am fascinated by you. You are unlike anything else I have encountered. I find you interesting."

Will gave a stiff laugh, "I do not believe you."

"But it is true. You know it is."

Will would not look at him. Hannibal reached out, the tips of his fingers brushed against Will's check. He wouldn't grab, or force Will to look. Rather, he touched to encourage eye contact. Will did turn his head, and it made his scowl more noticeable.

Will leaned back, and out of reach, "I do not find you interesting."

"You will," Hannibal smiled, then left the counter. He returned to the stovetop, where he removed the pan from the heat. From the cupboards he pulled out two dark blue plates, their color grainy, like dyed sand. Will watched as the salmon fillets were placed onto the plates and sprinkled with salt and lime juice.

"Salt and lime salmon," Hannibal said, and placed a plate before Will. Next to the plate Hannibal placed a knife and fork. "Have you used utensils before?"

Will said nothing, but picked up the fork and used the side to cut a chunk of salmon. Albeit a bit clumsy, Will could indeed use utensils. Will ignored a direct question, however, and that was not acceptable. Like a child, Will pushed the boundaries of the rules, and testing Hannibal's limits.

"Will, I asked you a question." Hannibal said. He had to enforce his rules lest he have an unruly selkie on his hands.

"Yes," Will said with exaggeration, and mouth full of food, "I can use utensils."

"Your table manners will need refreshing," Hannibal intoned. Will cracked sly smile. "There will be consequences for your actions, William. Disobey my rules, you will receive those consequences." Hannibal left the table to pour himself a glass of red wine. Will watched him move across the kitchen, but when Hannibal looked back at Will, the selkie would look away.

"As for my other rules, they are just as simple as the first." Hannibal said upon his return to the counter, a glass of red in his hand. "Do not attempt to escape. My house is secured against anything you may try. Do not make a mess or touch things you should not touch. Many things in my house are antiques, and I prefer cleanliness and order within my home."

"I thought it is my home too," Will said with a cheeky grin.

"It is, but you are also my house guest, and thus must follow my rules." Hannibal watched Will's reaction. The selkie looked away and finished its meal quickly. Once its plate was

cleaned of every morsel of food, it took back to staring out the window. Hannibal took Will's silence as acceptance. "Do you--"

Will seized his plate and hurled it at the window. The plate flew right and shattered against the wall. White flecks and chucks and porcelain scattered across the kitchen, with pieces reaching as far the kitchen entryway. Hannibal's mouth formed a tight line. That plate was part of a set.

Hannibal swallowed, his jaw working as he reigned back the anger that pulsed through him. His blood burned in response to Will's violence. The selkie himself sat in its chair, still as a statue and as innocent as a devil. Hannibal's eyes bore into Will. There will be punishment for what the selkie has done.

Silence cut through the space between them, bleeding the seconds, the minutes, into a vile puddle. Neither moved. Neither spoke.

The house phone rang, a simple, and cheery mono-tone that rang throughout the house. Mouth twisted into a snarl, Hannibal shoved away from the counter and snatched the phone off its holder.

"What," He shouted into the receiver, and nearly slammed the phone down onto the counter when no response came for several moments. But Hannibal could hear breathing on the other line, quick and frightened.

"Trouble in paradise?" Frederick Chilton intoned.

Hannibal almost slammed the phone down.

"What is it, Chilton?" Hannibal said.

"I forgot to ask you about Auction." Chilton answered. "You are planning on selling the Selkie and the skin, aren't you? Together they make a wonderful set."

Hannibal ran a hand over his face. Auction, he had forgotten about it himself. So caught up in finally catching his prey he let details and future plans slip out of mind. "Yes, Chilton. Together." He looked over his shoulder to see if Will was listening. He knew the selkie would, but no one sat at the counter. The kitchen was empty.

"Chilton, I must--"

"That is great news Hannibal. I'll start spreading the word. Many people will be--"

"Chilton, this is not a good time." Hannibal moved around the kitchen island and into the doorway. Still no selkie. Every lock is in place so the selkie can't leave, but it can still cause all sorts of trouble.

"Yes, I'm sure you have your hands full with that selkie, but I wanted to you know that this year is my year to--"

Hannibal hung up the phone and tossed it onto an empty chair. He stood still in the hallway, body tensed, hands raised and ready to defend or attack. Will could be anywhere, trying to escape, or waiting to ambush Hannibal. Given the chance Will would kill him.

Room by room, Hannibal searched the first floor, the layout spread across his mind, a map of every nook, cranny, and hiding spot. First he checked the Basement door. Locked, and no sign of any attempts at forced entry. Will was not ready for what was in the basement. The selkie wasn't ready for any of Hannibal's dirty secrets.

A heavy thud thundered upstairs. Then silence. Will had knocked something over, but what? Most of the rooms were locked, aside from the guest bedroom he had intended to give Will. There was no point in guessing what the selkie had done. Hannibal headed upstairs, testing doors as he walked past, all the ones that should be locked were untouched. He turned a corner and saw the attic ladder, stretched down, its bottom resting against the wooden floor. So that was the thud.

Hannibal checked the rest of the second floor to be sure Will was not hiding there, the attic door merely a distraction. But Will was not on the second floor, so that left the attic. Through the opening he could hear nothing. Will must be waiting for him.

"Come down, William," Hannibal called. There was no answer. "William." He repeated. Still nothing. Hannibal took a breath, and climbed the ladder.

Will was not waiting for him, but sat with his back to Hannibal, surrounded by Hannibal's black art portfolios.

"Will?" Hannibal said, but Will's attention were on the sheets scattered around him. What had Will found? He approached the selkie, and stopped when he saw Will's face on the sheets. Not Will's face exactly, some had the hair too short, others had the nose wrong, or some other flaw, but Will's profile in charcoal clearly stood out against the white paper.

Will stirred, and turned his head to halfway look at Hannibal, "You made these?" Will held up a sheet to the light. Hannibal recognized it as one of his earlier pictures of Will, done lightly in pencil. "This is. . .me?"

Hannibal didn't know what to say, so he answered Will's question. "Yes, it is." Hannibal had forgotten about the pictures, and the fevered madness they brought out in him. Will held picture after picture up to the light, each held by the corner to avoid smudging the dark lines. Then placed into a neat pile. Hannibal wished he could see Will's face, and what emotion it held.

"When did you make these?" Will asked.

Hannibal moved closer, "Years ago. Seven years." He stood behind Will, the selkie's head turned once to look at Hannibal's knees, then back to its face on the paper.

"You find. . .beauty in me." Will said, "I am your fascination." Will's bitter words were gone, replaced by something else, a tone more genuine, insightful. Hannibal moved in front of Will

and looked upon the selkie's face. Will's mouth was turned down, but not in a frown, and his brows were knit together. A face of study, and one trying to understand.

"I meant what I said," Hannibal began. Will looked up, his gaze hovered at Hannibal's mouth. "I find you interesting."

Will's eyes darted up, and for a moment held eye-contact. "I believe you."

Chapter End Notes

Thanks to everyone who leaves comments and kudos, you guys make me so happy. I really don't have any excuse for the long wait, save some writer's block and then vacation. I'm going to try and push out chapters, and hopefully not make you guys wait another month.

One Month

Chapter Summary

> Exhaling deeply through his nose, Hannibal pinched the bridge, and tried not to think of the mess made by this misunderstanding. He tried once more to coax Will out of the water, but either the selkie could not hear or understand him, or simply wished to remain.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Living in in Hannibal's home came with several simple rules. After their little scene in the attic, Hannibal explained the rest to Will in the selkie's new room. They were all simple rules; do not make a mess, do not touch the art that hung on the walls, and do not enter the basement or closet doors with the exception of the one within Will's own room.

The other rules, however, were more difficult for Will to follow. The largest being: no trying to escape. Though the selkie was admirable in its attempts at stealth, Hannibal often caught Will fiddling with the locks on the doors and windows. Will never messed with the same window or door twice, but moved about the house where allowed, methodically testing each lock.

Many nights Hannibal caught Will out of his room, simply wandering through the house in his barefeet. Hannibal would approach, ask if the selkie needed anything. When Will answered nothing, Hannibal would ask Will to return to his room. Will did as he asked, but would never stay put for long. However, the selkie never got into any trouble on his nightly walks, so for the time being, Hannibal let Will be.

Other rules of the house included being polite and answering questions when asked, and to not search for the skin. Hannibal was quick to inform Will that the skin was held in a safe location off the property and any attempt to search for it here will be futile, and no doubt get Will in trouble. Will accepted this, but Hannibal still caught the selkie searching, perhaps holding onto the hope that by chance he may find it.

The hunter did his best to be fair, to reward good behavior when possible, and punished the bad with restrictions upon freedoms and luxuries.

Within the first week of their shared lives, Hannibal learned of Will's fascination with electronic technology, namely his ipad. While Hannibal sat in his study, going about his work on the pad, Will would watch him. At first Hannibal thought it was an attempt to learn more about him for will studied him as much as the ipad itself. That soon changed when he left the

room for a brief moment, and to come back to find Will experimenting with the touch screen, delight on his face as he unknowingly browsed the web.

Hannibal chided Will for using his tablet without his permission, then offered it back to the selkie, who happily continued to learn and play with the device. It was a happy discovery that soon opened the doors for many opportunities.

After only a few days with Will, it was obvious the selkie could not read. Hannibal's early attempts at lessons were met with rebellion. Will was restless during the lessons, and became unresponsive to learning. The English alphabet was not the easiest to learn, and Hannibal's clinical lessons did not click with Will. In a flash of brilliance, Hannibal downloaded various reading and writing apps geared towards young children, then let Will teach himself through the programs.

This was met with considerable success. Will's excitement over technology bubbled over into the reading lessons. The simple, more colorful instruction resonated with Will, stimulating his brain in new ways. Within a week Will had mastered the basics, and Hannibal downloaded more advanced lessons along with several books for Will to practice the new skill with. Will spent most of his days reading after learning, and no longer left his room for nightly walks. Hannibal realized that the selkie must have been bored.

"Why is there only one word for wind?" Will asked one day over dinner. Hannibal paused mid-bite. Though he required Will to dine with him, it was rare for Will to speak first. Often their meals were taken in silence.

"What do you mean?"

Will scrunched his nose, as if Hannibal's words personally displeased him, "In the books, there is only one word used for wind, light, rain, fog. Why are they limited to only one word?"

Hannibal finished his bite, and chewed thoughtfully. He decided there was no answer that would satisfy the selkie, "What are your words for such things?" He asked instead.

Will laughed, the first time Hannibal had ever heard it. He likened it to the trill of a flute, soft, but firm, "There are hundreds."

"Some examples?"

Will closed his eyes, and took a deep breath, "Skyare, is the light of the full moon, bright, clear. Skyued, the look of the sky after a storm full of thunder. For rain. . . aitran, the cold, freezing rains. Hellyiefer, for when the rain falls in an outpour. A rav is a light, misting rain."

As the two ate, Will listed every word he knew for the weather, and their meanings. There were words to describe general terms, and words for specific events that happen under specific conditions. Spoken in Will's musical speech, his words were alluring, a gentle, slow roll of words. It made Hannibal think of hot, lazy days spent outside, lounging in cool shade.

Long after all their food was gone, Will continued to give words, and stories of how each word feels, and what it looks like from under the waves. Before long, all of their dinner conversations became about words, their uses and history. Will's vocabulary exploded as Hannibal described new words to him that were unique to humans and modern society.

It was pleasant to look back on the last two weeks and see how far Will had come. Hannibal wanted the selkie to feel content, but had not expected to find such a lively conversation partner.

Not all of Will's little surprises were pleasant. It was expected that Will would not take kindly to clothes. Hannibal purchased many fine clothes for him to wear, garments of silk and cashmere, but Will ignored all softer fabric choices. He seemed to be fond of simple cotton and flannel fabrics. Hannibal did his best to push Will to dress in the clothes he prefered, and perhaps Will understood as such, and used it as a means of subtle rebellion. More often than not, however, Hannibal found Will wandering the house naked.

It was almost endearing at first, and to give Will time to adjust to his new environment, Hannibal allowed for Will to go about as normal, but as the weeks passed, Hannibal began to encourage Will to wear more clothes. On days where he only presented the clothes he liked, Will would more often than not simply go naked, but once Hannibal indulged the selkie with its clothing preference, Will was more likely to wear them. To the outside observer it appeared like Will were controlling Hannibal, and the hunter would allow that, but he played a long game, and sooner or later he will have Will dressed the way he pleases.

It took over month to realize Will's other surprise for him. Due to his work as a psychiatrist, Hannibal was required to leave the house for several hours during the weekday. It was pleasant at first, how Will was able to behave himself while Hannibal was away. The selkie had plenty of books and activities to do through the tablet, and Hannibal had taught Will how to work the radio and music players. For the first month Hannibal thought that things were going smoothly. That was, until the water bill came in.

The bill had increased by nearly seventy dollars. While money was hardly an issue, the thousands of extra gallons used within his house was. Will was clearly using a considerable amount of water each day, and Hannibal felt that outright asking Will about his water useage would get him nowhere.

So, he canceled and pushed a few appointments around, left his home as normal one day, then returned after a few hours. Upon entering his home again he heard music, and recognized the song from the Romeo and Juliet opera, yet, this was not one of his copies. The singer was not familiar to him, yet it was.

It was Will.

Selkies did not have the enchanting voices of mermaids and sirens, but their singing abilities were still highly regarded. Now Hannibal could hear why. Will's voice, a robust tenor, was full of richness and depth. The only apt comparison Hannibal could think of, was the rich flavor of cheesecake with sweet strawberry sauce atop. Will fluttered between sweet high notes, and the lower ones smooth as warm honey.

Hannibal made his way upstairs, mindful to make no noise so as to not disturb Will's performance. The sound came from his room. Hannibal frowned, he had instructed Will that his personal room was off limits to him, and walked in to find the room empty, but the door to his private bathroom open. Hannibal approached the door from the left, so Will would not see him, and peeked around the open door.

Will lounged in the large bathroom in the corner of the white tile bathroom, water filled up to the brim and splashing out with each little movement Will made. From there it was easy to compute the math and figure that Will took at least three of such baths every day for a whole month.

Hannibal waited until the final word left Will's mouth before he made himself known. As soon as Will saw him a bright red flush creeped across the selkie's face and to his ears and down his neck.

"Enjoying your bath?" Hannibal said, a wry smile pulling at the corner of his mouth.

"I. . . I didn't expect you to come back so soon," Will stammered, and sunk down to his eyes in the water.

"And you do this every day?" Hannibal said. Will sunk until completely submerged in the water. Hannibal motioned for Will to come back up, but the Selkie remained under the water. It was a large tub, five feet long and two feet tall. The closest the selkie could get to the ocean. "Will?"

It could have been complacency that resulted in his error. By this point the two had lived together for a month, and Hannibal thought he understood the selkie, or it was a lapse of judgement upon his part. In either circumstance, once more Hannibal underestimated what the selkie was capable of and of Will's mannerisms.

Hannibal pulled off his jacket, folding it neatly on the bathroom counter and rolled up his sleeve. He reached into the tub to fish Will out (and the selkie had been under for quite a while, he must be able to breathe even in his human form). With a vice grip the selkie grabbed hold of his arm and easily pulled Hannibal into the tub. Water surged over the edge of the tub, and splashed onto the white tile floor.

Survival instinct overcame all other feelings. Hannibal's hands found the selkie's neck and squeezed. Instantly the selkie's hands pushed him off with surprising strength, and Hannibal tumbled out of the tub, taking in deep breaths of air. Will curled into the far corner of the tub, hands placed protectively around his neck. There was fear in the selkie's eyes.

"I. . .I'm sorry. I'm sorry," Will sobbed.

Hannibal rolled to his feet, the mask slipped from his face, and revealed the monster underneath. Will could see it, and disappeared under the water, creating waves that threatened to slosh over the side.

Will was being playful.

Exhaling deeply through his nose, Hannibal pinched the bridge, and tried not to think of the mess made by this misunderstanding. He tried once more to coax Will out of the water, but either the selkie could not hear or understand him, or simply wished to remain. After so long Hannibal choose to mop up the water instead, and ignore Will for now. By the time he finished that Will still had not surfed. The only sign that Will was still alive was the occasional stream of bubbles that left his nose and streamed to the surface.

Will had to come out eventually, so Hannibal prepared for bed as normal, and read a book until Will came out of his bathroom, dressed in his cotton clothes.

“I am sorry,” Will said, his gazed fixed on the floor between them.

“You were simply playing,” Hannibal said, voice flat. Will nodded.

“I did not think it through,” And Will laughed again, but it was dry, the laughter directed at himself.

“You took me by surprise, and I acted in self defence. In the future, I suggest you give warning before such gestures. I apologize for hurting you when you meant no harm,” Hannibal tried to keep his tone light, to show Will that this was a simple misunderstanding. He motioned for the selkie to come over so he could inspect his neck, but Will darted out of the room. A short while later he heard the door to Will’s room slam shut.

The hunter knew that a wall had come up between the two. The month of peace had made them both careless, and forget who they really were. Will a selkie held captive, and him, the hunter that took his skin.

His phone vibrated. It was a text message from Chilton: Date for Auction has been announced. Everyone is excited to see the selkie and his skin.

Hannibal frowned at the screen. Chilton would have spread stories of the selkie amongst their peers, the fact that Hannibal had intended to sell must have caused an even greater still. The last selkie, an extinct race no one has seen in decades. Will wasn’t ready for Auction, but there was no way out.

Chapter End Notes

Whew, okay, so, confession. I'm not a fan of this chapter, which is partly why I've been putting this story off, and still am. However, I've decided to go ahead and post what I've written, and finish the rest. I won't say it'll be quick, but it'll happen.

As for the reason I don't really like this chapter, it's pretty much all exposition/telling and I've tired several times to expand it. So, just pretend this filler/buffer chapter for later events. The rest of the story won't like this. The part where Will and Hanni share a bath will not be like this (a little teaser for next chapter, aaaah!)

Anyways, I hope you guys like it. If not, let me know and I'll fix it.

Rebuilt

Chapter Summary

> “I’d like to take you out,”
>
> “Out?” Will said, and from the way the selkie repeated the word it sounded like Hannibal had some sinister plan. This would not do.
>
> “Out of the house.” Hannibal clarified, and offered a small, but sincere smile to Will.

Chapter Notes

> Okay, I lied. They share a bath in chapter 7, not 6. My bad. But wowie! New chapter!
>
> I am an awful person for being so slow to update this fic. All my readers are wonderful, amazing people who deserve better.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

One week had passed since the incident in the bathroom. Since then, Will avoided Hannibal. Their meals together, once full of lively discussion, turned into torture as the two sat in silence. Something had be done before he lost Will entirely to the selkie’s own guilt and isolation.

Auction was a month away, and with their current standings, Will would not take kindly to it. Close to desperation, Hannibal decided to play one of his cards. Earlier in the week he made a few calls, pulled a few strings, and arranged for a special surprize for Will.

“Will, please wait,” Hannibal said after breakfast. Will would eat his food as fast as he could then dart away, sometimes to hide in his room, and other times in a bathroom. Will had been half-way through the door out of the kitchen when Hannibal called out to him, “Please, sit a while longer, I have something to tell you,”

The selkie glanced back at Hannibal, his eyes never going higher than Hannibal’s chest. After a long pause, the selkie came back, and took his seat once more.

“I’d like to take you out,”

“Out?” Will said, and from the way the selkie repeated the word it sounded like Hannibal had some sinister plan. This would not do.

“Out of the house.” Hannibal clarified, and offered a small, but sincere smile to Will. The selkie studied his face, and his shoulders relaxed, “You will have to dress nicer than that, however,” Hannibal said with a motion towards the simple boxers and cotton shirt that Will now wore. “I will help you select something proper.”

Will fidgeted in his seat, knowing that Hannibal would select the clothes he didn’t like. Today, however, Hannibal was more than willing to compromise. From Will’s closet he selected a thin, blue flannel shirt with a light grey cotton sweater to go over top. For pants, he selected a pair of khaki slacks. It was a happy compromise for Will, who changed without complaint.

Will examined himself in the mirror, Hannibal behind as the hunter adjusted the skewed collar of the flannel shirt. In the time since Hannibal first brought Will home, the selkie’s skin lost the enchanting golden glow it held in sunlight, but some supernatural light clung to Will, a pastel glow that can pass as human, but no less beautiful. No less enchanting.

Still, Hannibal prefered to keep Will covered as much as possible to avoid further suspicion or attention given to the beautiful selkie. Will was his to admire.

“Thinking hard?” Will said, voice muted. The selkie stared at Hannibal through the mirror, and the hunter smiled back.

“You have changed.”

Will snorted, “I am always changing, you’ll have to be more specific.”

“I mean your skin. You appear human.” Hannibal skimmed the tips of his fingers across Will’s neck, the action made to look as though an accident in adjusting Will’s collar.

“It is what happens when one adjusts to land,” Will said, a sigh barely hidden behind the words, “It is the land that does this to me, its influence filling what was once taken by the ocean.”

Hannibal stared at the soft skin of Will’s neck, another adjustment and another soft brush of skin. He felt Will stifle a shiver. “You’ll see that the ocean does not have to be so far away.”

The last time Will had been inside a car, he had been under the effects of sedatives. Now that he is fully aware, the selkie pounced upon the prospect of a car ride. Will would often stare out the windows at passing cars, and had asked Hannibal about his own car several times.

It took a few gentle proddings to get Will to put on his seat belt then leave it alone (“It is uncomfortable”), but once the selkie was settled, Hannibal pulled out of the driveway.

As one who spent his whole life away from modern culture, the prospect of a city must have been overwhelming. Will held his face pressed up close to the window, absorbing the sights of towering buildings and many cars, but as he noticed just how large the city was, and how many people it held, he shrank further back into his seat.

“It is quite a lot, isn’t it?” Hannibal said, hoping to soothe the selkie, “That is understandable. You are still new to this. I should have prepared you better for this moment, but a trip out of the house will do us both good.”

“Where are we going?” Will asked, hesitant.

“It is a surprise,” Hannibal said, intentional mirth put in his tone. That seemed to catch Will’s attention. The selkie read the hunter’s face once more, and relaxed at what he found.

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“What is this place?” Will asked, wonder dripping off every word.

“This is the National Aquarium. I arranged for us to have a private visit.” Hannibal said, and had a few words with the manager, confirming who they were. The manager wished them a happy visit, and offered to arrange for a guided tour. Hannibal declined, preferring to enjoy this experience with just Will who seemed to buzz with excitement.

The selkie tried to look everywhere at once, and absorb the new sights, smells and sounds into his very being, “This is amazing,” Will breathed out in one word, “Where does it start?”

“Right over here,” Hannibal motioned towards the first exhibit. He placed a hand on Will’s shoulder, worried the selkie’s excitement would get the best of him. Even though the clothes, Will’s body gave off a comforting warmth, and though the smell of smell of the aquarium Hannibal could still smell Will’s natural musk.

Will marveled over the animals he had never seen before; at colorful, tropical fish who swam languidly in their dark green water. The tropical exhibit had Will gasping at every turn. He pressed close to every glass tank he could, to better see new species previously unknown to him.

From tropical coral reefs to a tropical jungle, Will immediately took to the exotic birds in the aviary. Birds as equally colorful as the fish chattered at the selkie who tried to stoke as many soft feathers as he could, any nips he received healed in a matter of minutes.

Crocodiles gave Will pause, the selkie admitting disbelief that such large and oddly shaped creatures could really live in the water. As he watched them swim amongst the fish of their tank, however, he quickly changed his mind.

Will watched jellyfish float by in a near trance, the moon jellyfish a particular favorite of his. They spent half an hour in that exhibit alone so Will could read every information plaque or display.

The dolphins and sharks held his interest out of the most, and gave stories of swimming with dolphin pods and even certain sharks.

Though Will could stay in the aquarium forever, continuously looping around (and indeed they went on three rounds through all the exhibits) their allotted time had passed and it was

time to go. Will was hesitant to leave and go back to the house. Hannibal lead them outside, but not to the car.

The two walked along the harbor outside the aquarium, a chilled breeze ruffled Will's dark curls, the selkie seemed immune to the cold.

"Why do you take so many bathes, WIll?" Hannibal asked, his gaze upon Will. The selkie walked the edge of the harbor, like he were torn between jumping in, and staying where he was.

"Wouldn't you?" Will said, "You spend your whole life on the land. If you were told to live in the sea, wouldn't you try to go back to the land, even if it were for only a little while?"

"That is a fair point," Hannibal said. He had suspected as much, but the confirmation of his thoughts was helpful.

Will stood at the very end of the dock, his toes hanging off the edge, "This isn't as bad as I thought it would be."

"I am glad," Hannibal answered honestly. He enjoyed this as well. Looking back, he didn't know how things had come to this point. Or when Will became a thoughtful companion within his solitary life. Will was fascinating, his mind able to take on perspectives that were not his own. A pure imagination with limitless possibilities. Will saw something in him as well, be it his own curiosity mirrored back to him through the selkie's mind, or for some hidden reason left to Hannibal to discover.

Sad to leave the docks, Hannibal spoke to Will about future visits during their drive back, and brought up the many other museum and art exhibits around the Baltimore area. With the distraction of conversation, and future possibilities of other excursions, Will's mood lifted.

At home he once more sought Hannibal for conversation and company. The Auction, only three weeks away, hung over Hannibal. Will was in a fragile state, and the selfish part of him wanted to keep the selkie all to himself.

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With Will once more comfortable around Hannibal, things fell into an easy pattern. Their meals became lively, and full of discussion on music and the arts. Hannibal continued to purchase various apps for Will on the tablet, unable to satisfy the selkie's lust for knowledge. On the weekend Hannibal would take Will to an art gallery or museum.

Will practically glowed these past two weeks, quick to laugh and smile and even playful. He had taken to moving things around the house. It were small things, like nicknacks or decorations. Perfectly coordinated displays became a mishmash of color and texture, but Hannibal found that he did not mind as much as he thought he would.

To him, it felt like Will was making Hannibal's home his home as well by adding to its style.

One week before the Auction, Will made a strange request of Hannibal over diner.

“I want to go to work with you,” Will said after thoroughly chewing his bite of liver and spinach pesto. By now Will was intimate with French cuisine, and Hannibal began to introduce the selkie to the cuisine of other cultures.

“Due to the nature of my work you would not be able to sit in with me,” Hannibal said.

“All you do is talk to people,”

“It is more than that. My job is to help people through their problems and mental afflictions. It is a very private matter. There is patient-therapist confidentiality. They trust me to keep their secrets, but they would not know you, they can not trust you.”

Will made a sour face, “I’d still like to go.”

Hannibal gave Will a knowing smile, “You would be terribly bored.”

“I can read,” Will answered.

“You would have to sit in the same room for hours. I know you, Will. You get terribly stir crazy from sitting in the same place for ten minutes.”

The pout on Will’s face was adorable, but such shows of emotional manipulation would not sway Hannibal. With Will in the other room Hannibal would not be able to keep an eye on the mischievous selkie, and then there was the question of how the selkie would interact with his patients. For now, Hannibal compromised.

“Is there anyplace you’d like to go?” He asked, “One of my afternoon appointments canceled so I have extra time,”

“Actually,” Will began, his tone slow and meaningful, like he were waiting for Hannibal to ask that very question, “There is one place I would like to go to.”

“Name it,”

“The supermarket.”

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Though the request was strange, and a far cry from the places of culture Hannibal had taken Will to before, the hunter was more than happy to satisfy Will’s wish. The selkie asked questions non-stop along the way, such as if food were really available year-round, even during the cold season where nothing would grow, and if there were aisles of long refrigerators with glass doors. Hannibal, simply told Will that he will have to wait and see for himself.

The more Hannibal thought about it, the more convenient and well placed Will’s request seemed. Hannibal had planned a trip to the market as his store of food was dwindling. Did Will see this and planned his request because he knew it was a trip Hannibal had to make, and thus more likely for Will to be brought along? It was a very real possibility, and Hannibal decide to pay closer attention to the selkie who missed no small detail.

Since the supermarket Will questioned about was the traditional, mainstream market, Hannibal took Will there first. He had specific markets for his produce and other goods, but while here he can purchase cleaning supplies. Hannibal had not planned to purchase anything else, but Will, it seemed, had other plans. The selkie wandered through the allies, but it was not aimless, he searched for specific things.

Will stopped at the selection of peanut butter, a victorious smile upon his features.

“This. I’d like this,” Will said and grabbed the closest jar of peanut butter. Hannibal frowned at the processed paste that called itself food, and could practically smell the chemicals and flavorings that had been added to it.

“I could have made you some if you had asked,” Hannibal said as he wondered what other unsavory foods Will wished to inflict upon his body.

“No, I want this.” Will insisted, and put the jar in their basket and continued on his quest before Hannibal could get a word in edgewise. Though Will was good company, his manners needed constant guidance and reminders. To Hannibal’s growing concern, Will added grape jelly, potato chips and pizza rolls of all things to their basket.

“I can make all of these things,” Hannibal said as Will inspected a selection of donuts and bagels.

“But these are what everyone else eats. I want to eat them too.” Will selected several donuts of various sizes and shapes, “I had thought everyone ate like you do.”

“What I make is much healthier for the body,” Hannibal answered, tempted to convince Will to put all of this back. Will gave him that pout again, and Hannibal began to question where Will learned such a gesture. Or of junk food for that matter. The answer was all too obvious. Will spent far too much time on the internet.

“I just want to try them at least once,” Will said with an air of finality, and turned, ready to go off in search of whatever processed horror he wished to taste when the selkie stopped, head tilted curiously to the side.

“Do you know him?” Will asked, gesturing vaguely to the side. Hannibal followed the direction of the gesture, and saw Franklyn waving to capture his attention. As soon as Hannibal saw his patient, the man excitedly made his way over. “Is he a friend?” Will asked.

“No,” Was the only reply Hannibal could give before Franklyn came up beside the two, a wide smile on his face.

“Doctor Lecter! What a surprise! I mean, I never expected to see you in a place like this. Not that it’s, um, it’s a welcome surprise that we shop at the same supermarket.” Franklyn babbled, either ignoring Will’s presence, or simply not aware of it yet. Hannibal would have betted on the later.

Will shyly stepped back when the other man came close. Still unaccustomed to socializing with people other than Hannibal, the selkie tried to appear like he were uninterested in the

conversation, but still listened.

“I came here at the request of Will,” Hannibal said, and motioned to Will who Franklyn noticed for the first time.

“Oh, hello. Are you another of the Doctor Lecter’s patients?” Franklyn asked, a hopeful spike to his tone.

“I am,” Will said before Hannibal can answer. Confidence washed over the selkie, and Hannibal suspected that Will took on a persona to cover his social awkwardness. “I asked him to bring me here as I can not travel on my own.”

This tidbit of information seemed to inspire and deflate Franklyn. Hannibal was not blind to the open worship the neurotic man heaped upon him. The hunter did his best to keep Franklyn at a professional distance, and was close to success, until this moment.

“Speaking of travel,” Hannibal said, and placed a hand upon Will’s shoulder, a silent command for the selkie to be quiet, “There are still errands to be done, and we must be going.”

“Oh, well, yes, of course. I shall see you at our next session, doctor Lecter,” Franklyn said, extending a hand for Hannibal to shake. Will beat the doctor to it, suggesting that Will had been waiting to try such a human gesture out. It was a quick shake, and Will’s hand pulled back faster than he had extended it. Once they parted ways from Franklyn Will made a face.

“I don’t think I like handshakes,” Will said. “How can humans stand it, and every time they talk to someone,” Will shook his head, and wiped his hands off on his jeans.

“It is a formal gesture, and one that is polite to reciprocate when offered,”

“Then I will have to be rude and decline,” Will said with a smug smile. Hannibal returned a look that gave Will pause, but before long that smile was back and Will continued his shopping spree, adding an assortment of candy bars to the pile of processed foods.

Hannibal decided to give Will lessons on nutrition while at the other markets.

Chapter End Notes

I'm not going to make any promises about updates, because I end up breaking them. And that's not fair to you guys. Has work resumed on this fic? Yes. But updates may still be slow.

I love you guys for all the support, and wonderful words. It really is your comments that make me kick myself in the butt and try to get chapters posted. This story is dedicated to all of its readers.

End Notes

I have about 8 chapters written for this, so I'll try to update at least once a week. Hope I caught everyone's attention with this first chapter.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!